

ON THE KLONDYKE

F. P. Hemen Returns From
Seattle With Much Information.

SPRINGTIME THE TIME TO GO

Speaks With a Friend
Just Returned.

Says There is Plenty of Room for
All—Money Lies Around Only
To Be Picked Up.

Among the arrivals from Vancouver on the C.-A. S. S. Mowera Monday was F. P. Hemen, a former resident of Seattle, but now of this city. He has been on a short visit to relatives and friends in his old home, and returns brimful of information on the recent boom in that place and the exciting scenes of people seeking to the Klondyke from all parts

I were to give you information gleaned from various sources. A couple of years ago, a Mr. Kelly, a Seattle man, became very much tied up in business matters. He went to the Klondyke and, about a fortnight before I returned home, came back with enough money to pay off all his mortgages and to insure him a comfortable living for the rest of his life. His sons are now on the claim in the Klondyke, and will work during the winter. Mr. Kelly will return in the spring.

"He says that the ground in winter is frozen for about 100 feet down. At this depth is the bed-rock, in which is to be found the most gold, although the soil above is very rich in itself.

"When a claim is granted, the prospectors build their cabins in convenient places and set to work immediately. Great fires are built out of the timber that is so abundant, and the ground is thawed out. The soil is then soft for some distance down, and this is dug up and set aside. When the limit of thawed ground is reached another fire is built and more thawed out. So the work goes on from day to day.

"Kelly showed me samples of the dirt, and I must say it certainly is rich. To illustrate this point I would say that, during last spring, Kelly and his sons dug out a lot of soil to work on during the winter. It was estimated that there was about \$2,000 in the pile. It was not considered worth the while to wash this, and it was given to a friend, who succeeded in getting \$4,800 out of the pile.

"There is plenty to do for those who want to go up. Kelly says that as far as prospecting is concerned, the whole Pacific States couldn't prospect it in 20 years. When he left the Klondyke only 100 miles had been staked off on the north side. The other side had hardly been touched, although rich diggings had been found there, too.

"A great deal has been said about the danger from thieves and cut-throats in the Klondyke. It was given

is a matter of only 500 miles (100 miles a day) to Dawson City.

"Two surveying parties left Seattle recently to survey two railroads, these to strike into the headwaters of the Yukon. Next spring these will be built from Dyea to the rapids and from there little steamers will take the people to Dawson City. The company claims that the roads will be ready by next August. The material will be shipped into Dyea this winter.

"Two crews of ships' carpenters are now in St. Michael putting up steamers for the Yukon. The frames are made in Seattle and shipped to that place. The Alaska Trading Company has a number of steamers running up the river now with stores and building material. I might say here that flour is \$12 per 100 pounds and lumber \$1 a foot. The competition in the spring will lower this materially.

"While I am on this point, I may as well say something about what can be made by laborers and others at the Klondyke to show that the prices charged for material and provisions is nicely offset. A laborer gets \$15 a day and the cost of living is about \$4 for the same time. Ten or eleven dollars a day saved is not bad. A meal is \$1 and a drink the same.

"A lady went to the Klondyke not long ago and set up a bakery. She bought 100 pounds of flour for \$12, made on an average of 120 loaves from one bag and sold a loaf for 60 cents, a profit of about \$60 on a bag. Of course, you must understand that all of this is paid for in gold dust, weighed out in the scales. If there is not quite enough dust in the scales, there is never a failure to call for the requisite amount, but if the scales should happen to go down with a bump, no dust is taken out to balance them.

"The Klondyke is not the only place where gold has been found recently. Some very rich mines have been struck east of the mountains in the State of Washington. Nuggets worth all the



MAP OF THE KLONDYKE SHOWING DISPUTED BOUNDARY LINES.

of the world on the hunt after the gold that glitters. His information is of particular value, since it has been obtained from friends of his who have been right to the Klondyke and who have, with their own hands, dug out the soil that contained the coveted gold dust.

"You begin by asking me what the prospects are for people who are thinking of going to the Klondyke," said Mr. Hemen, "and I tell you that the stories of the wealth of the country are not exaggerated. The prospects are of the best for men who do not become easily discouraged. To show you that I have confidence in what the Klondyke soil will yield, I have urged my two sons to go up and try their luck. They will leave in the spring.

"Why in the spring? Simply because it is the height of folly for people unacquainted with the country, and yet without a claim, to attempt to go up during the winter. The place is all frozen up, and, in order to keep from freezing to death, one must build a cabin as a shelter. There is nothing for him to do but wait the spring. When this comes on and a claim is located, it will probably be found a great distance away from the cabin. Then there is an additional problem. I would advise people to wait for the spring. No prospecting is done until then. There is plenty of room and plenty of time. When the springtime comes, things will be brighter. Just now, people hurry to the Klondyke to find a frozen country. They become discouraged, throw down their tools and return to where they came from totally disheartened and with all the money they had saved up gone for nothing.

"Perhaps what I heard from a friend of mine, who has been to the Klondyke himself, will have more weight than if

to me as a fact that people were in the habit of leaving containers of gold dust outside their cabins when off to work, and not a bit had ever been known to be touched. Of course, there is no telling what things may happen in two or three years from now, but at the present time there is absolutely no danger. Then, too, the laws are very rigid, and it is hardly probable that any one is going to run any risks.

"There is plenty of money up there to be had for the digging. Libbey, of whom your readers have all heard, says that nothing in California was ever known to equal the Klondyke. One party returned recently with \$165,000, which had been gathered in six months. The sluice boxes had to be cleaned out four or five times.

"Now, then, something as to transportation. Two days before I left Seattle the steamer Walla Walla, from San Francisco, arrived with 500 people bound for the Klondyke. Some of these were provided with horses. At that time it was claimed a steamer would leave Seattle every day in the spring. There are a great many steamers in Seattle now, and in the summer the place will be flooded. The passage from Seattle to Dawson City is \$150 for first-class and \$125 for second-class. This allows each one only 150 pounds of baggage, but in the spring the passage will be much less and people will be allowed to take their supplies, etc. But then by that time there will be no need for any one to take supplies, as there will be plenty at the Klondyke.

"A great many people go overland from Dyea to the lakes, a distance of 27½ miles, and haul their stuff across the divide. Once there, they can easily procure boats. After having gone down the rapids by the aid of long ropes, it

way from \$100 to \$800 have been taken out. When I was in Seattle a large pile was placed in one of the show windows of a leading jewelry store. Then again some rich placer diggings have been struck in the Olympic range, between Seattle and the Coast. The soil is extremely rich, and people are going there, too.

"All this has created a great boom in Seattle. The town is hung with pictures at various places, representing prospectors going to the Klondyke in all sorts of ways. For blocks along the streets, provisions, done up in waterproof canvas coverings, are piled up several feet high for the many who have sent in their orders.

"The hotels cannot hold the people, and many are forced to get lodgings wherever they can, some even being forced to the very outskirts of the city."

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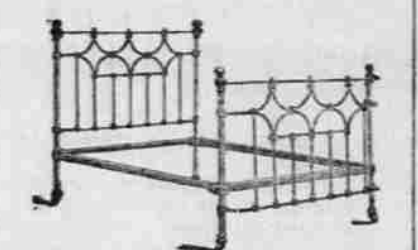
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